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Beware OF THE Poet



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Esther Marguerite Wass

ESTHER MARGUERITE WASS

BEWARE OF THE POET
and other poems

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FOREWORD

Reverend Marvin L. Ediger

DEDICATED TO MY HUSBAND
of 58 years
AND OUR BELOVED FAMILY,
Homer, Wallace and Betty

Cover Design By Chip Wass, Grandson

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Esther Marguerite Wass
Little Falls, Minnesota

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many of the poems in this book were published in The Moccasin by the League of Minnesota Poets, in the Hutchinson Leader, the Country Echo, the American Amateur Press Association, the North Hennepin Artists Association and the World of Poetry.

FOREWORD

The poetry in this book was written by Esther Marguerite Wass, who was born on October 29, 1903 in Proctor, Minnesota. When she was one year old her parents, John and Emily Moberg purchased some timberland near Pequot now Pequot Lakes, Minnesota, which they converted into farmland. This is where Esther spent her childhood years.

Esther married Arthur Carl Wass on April 11, 1927. Two sons and a daughter were born to them. Arthur died on April 24, 1985 in St. Gabriel's Hospital in Little Falls, Minnesota. He had been a kidney dialysis patient for over eleven years.

Esther's background consists mainly of being a farmer's wife, a resort operator, and a weaver. She has been a member of The League of Minnesota Poets for 25 years. She has had over 65 poems published. Some of them have been reproduced many times. Her "Crickets" was on the cover of the Autumn issue of The Moccasin in 1962. Her "Ribbon Grass" was published in the book, Today's Best Poems by The World of Poetry, in Sacramento, California.

Esther is a member of the First United Church in Little Falls, where she now resides. Recently she has been giving poetry programs to a number of groups in Little Falls, and has been told that the poetry she has composed throughout the years has captivated her listeners.

"To write poetry successfully, one must be the master of one's tools," she notes. Diction, rhythm, rhyme, stress, meters, masculine and feminine endings, and imagination all play a part in her poems. Hope you enjoy her work.

Rev. Marvin L. Ediger
Pastor, First United Church

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BEWARE OF THE POET

I used to think a poet sat
Beside a silver-stream,
While he conjured up rhythm to
His favorite rhyme-scheme,
But now I know a poet does
Not live just by his pen,
But needs must earn by other means,
And write just now and then.

A poet studies - it is true-
From morning until night,
And often strives relentlessly
To keep that rhythm right,
But poems do not bring sustenance
Unless those poems are read,
So poets toil at other tasks
To earn their daily bread.

But poets are a happy lot,
Who live within their dreams,
Who often find material
To fit poetic-themes,
While listening to the problems
Of folks, who do not know them,
But when their listening is done
Beware! They write a poem.

His Tenderness Outweighs His Wrath

A blizzard rages with such force
It wages havoc in its course,
Makes windows rattle, rafters roar,
And snow drift round about the door!
We feel the fury of it all
Yet, as He lets each snowflake fall,
We see intricacies of grace
Quite unexcelled by manmade lace.

On counting trees the wind takes down
We more than likely stage a frown,
Until we spy the oriole nest
In the birch, which stood the test.
We fear the furor of the storm
That lashes out and bends to form,
But still we know, on stormy days,
His tenderness His wrath outweighs.

COTTON-CANDY CLOUDS

Above the cotton-candy clouds
A jet plane goes asailing;
'Twill bring my love to you, my dear
With this note I am mailing.

IN THE FALL

I look out across the water,
See it glimmer in the sun,
As it ripples to the river
Saying, "Summer days are done!"

How I loved to watch the maples
Change in color day by day;
Gorgeous oaks display their foliage
In an arrogant array!

But I feel a kind of sadness
I cannot explain at all
When I see a stately white pine
Shedding needles in the fall.

ONE LITTLE WREN

What a thrill we will get when the wrens arrive!
Their rollicking tune will make things come alive!

The houses are ready for them to move in
While twigs lie waiting for wrens to begin.

Lovers of music, played over again,
Will get a full measure from one little wren.

HUMMINGBIRDS

Mid the branches of a pine tree
Through which winds have often stirred,
Is a nest compact and cozy . . .
Built there by the hummingbird.

Mossy patches form the sidewalls
Of this castle in the air,
From the fluffy dandelion
Comes a lining soft and fair.

Midget in these giant branches
Soon two tiny eggs will lay;
Bravely they will guard their babies
From the larger birds of prey.

Dewdrops are their dainty bath tubs,
Insects are their daily bread,
Mixed with nectar from the flowers
Hummingbirdlings will be fed.

A RAGGED GYPSY

Just like a ragged gypsy,
At times I'd like to be,
Free from all the daily cares
Life bestows on me.

THE QUESTION

The question is whether
Loose dogs belong
Within city limits;
Is is right
Or is it wrong?
If we have a nice tree
We are quick to admit,
That a dog is unwelcome
Anywhere near it,
While lovers of dogs
Quite freely agree,
That a dog is more precious
Than most any tree.
"I will leave it to you . . .
Your vote if you please,
Will it go to the dogs,
Or favor the trees."

REMORSE

I bought a little weeping willow,
But I really did not know
He disliked the weeping willow;
He had never told me so.
Now it makes my heart feel heavy. . .
Teardrops flow, for all to see,
When I hear the wind blowing
Through that weeping willow tree.

RED SKIES

We like to watch the sunrise,
And often wonder why
Some elect to lie a-bed
And skip the morning sky.

Reflections on the water
Make the pleasure doublefold;
Today we saw a crimson cloud
Converting into gold.

The sky was quickly overcast;
The brightness that we need
Was lost to all, who did not see
The red sky sailors heed.

SUMMER

On summer nights my thoughts are deep -
It would be hard to go to sleep,
But chirping crickets intervene,
And frogs keep croaking in between.
While night-birds raise their calls aloft,
The night-wind murmurs low and soft,
And soon I drift beyond the schemes
Of summer sounds to pleasant dreams.

On winter nights it would be still
More difficult to sleep at will,
But then I think of summertime
With all its colorful birds in rhyme.
Although the snow lies cold and sleek
The creaking mill still has its creak,
And fruit and flowers bring memories,
Which put my restless mind at ease.

SECURITY

As night-time pulls the curtain down
Across the summer sky
By closing out the sunset tints
So pleasing to the eye,
I feel the clasp of childish hands
Secure within my own;
For night-time is no time at all
To play outside alone.

The night-time pulled the curtain down
When I was little too,
And sunset colors were the same,
Some pleasing rainbow hue,
And night-time meant to go inside.
With reassuring tone,
My dad would clasp my childish hand
Securely in his own!

SHADE

If all the gold
The world could hold
Was offered to me today,
I would not trade
The wealth of shade
One maple lends my way.

SHOWERS OF APRIL

The scent of the apple blossom
Is prevalent in the air,
While relevant things of springtime
Are evident everywhere.

A nestful of baby robins
In livening up their call,
Are out to be feathered and flying
As truly as petals will fall.

The clouds are revealing their presence
By lending a sprinkle or two,
The eventual showers of April
Are turning the old into new.

CATKINS

The shiny, silky catkin cup,
That April sunshine opens up,
Is like a bursting chrysalis
Which opens very much like this:
A gentle rain . . . a balmy breeze
Will bring these catkins to the trees;
While some are plain, the others hold
Some tiny specks of powdered gold.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

It was getting dark, and would soon be night,
So Mother and I took a lantern light.
A setting hen, we were going to buy,
To hatch some chickens for us to fry.
Then I was only six years old,
So I stayed in the parlor when I was told.
While I was rocking back and forth,
Munching a cookie for all I was worth.
I was watching the hands of an old wooden clock,
Which kept repeating Tick! Tock! Tick! Tock!
When Mother came back I felt like a rag,
A broody, black hen was in a burlap bag.
I wanted to see her pretty, red comb,
But Mother said, "Honey, we must hurry home,
Lest she might smother like some chickens do,
Leaving us only the evening to rue."

SUNSET

The clouds are kissed by amethyst,
And variant shades of rose,
While aquamarines laid in between
Some hints of green disclose.
For those, who love the colors of
The skies at eventide,
The sunsets hold a wealth untold
Of tints intensified.

OUR PET ROOSTER

We had a pet rooster
As tame as they come;
Pet roosters add much
To the pleasures of home.

We had a new preacher
Who came out to call;
Most preachers like chicken,
This one most of all.

I said, "You may have one
But catch him you must,"
Then he picked our pet rooster,
Who would never mistrust.

Now its hard to eat chicken
Without giving a thought
To the fate of that rooster,
Which our minister caught.

TODAY

Today the sun is shining through,
But let us not forget
If skies become all overcast
We should not be upset,
For He, who makes the sun to shine
Will also bring the rain,
And when He takes the clouds away
The sun will shine again.

ONE STARRY NIGHT

Whenever stars are seen at night
We see them large, and small,
But if the sky is overcast
We see no stars at all.

It must have have been a starry night
When wise men from afar
Came to the place where Christ was born,
By following a star.

When they reached the stable-bed
The star gleamed from above,
A manger held the new-born King,
Who filled the world with love.

PURPLE MARTINS

The house had better be ready
When the purple martins come,
For this magnificent family
Will really be needing a home.

We think on their journey northward
That weary their way might be,
But they come with their crops full of insects,
And each heart filled with melody.

SHADOWS

In lacy patterns shadows fall
Upon an ageing garden wall,
As, one by one, the lights go on
The sun sinks slowly, and is gone.
Then, here and there, the shrubs I see
Cast silhouettes that frighten me,
Like ghouls, or animals that wait
To grab me at the garden gate.
Those shadows give me such a start
I feel the throbbing of my heart,
Until within the house I glide
To leave the shadows all outside.

THE PATTERN OF LIFE

Into the pattern of life we weave
Colors of every hue;
Within the warp we contrive to conceal
Some things which we say,
And some deeds that we do.
We are the shuttles that slowly unwind
To fill in the woof as we go;
We press down the treadle,
The beater we pull
To leave a patterned glow.
As you weave a pattern from day to day
Line it with lots of love;
We wish you the best of everything
You may be thinking of.

CRICKETS

The crickets are searching
For cracks in the wall;
They soon will be chirping
Around in the hall.
With saws that are sharpened,
And cloaks dark as night,
These witches are groping
About with delight.
A cricket will welcome,
With an ebony grin,
A teakettle's whistle
Which bids him, "Come in!"
Go fill the coal scuttle,
Bring out my black shawl,
When crickets are chirping
We know it is fall!

MAKING HAY

We mowed our hay today;
Bright green it was, and tall enough to harvest;
The stems were in the blossom stage.
Their texture was the finest.
The cows, that we have taken from the pasture,
Contentedly are posing for a picture;
And, silently we pray
That warm and sunny weather will keep the crop secure
Against the time that winter will place a coverlet
Where blooms of yesterday
Were filled with sweetness . . . to be sure
The honey bees were there
Some honey to secure.

IN ARIZONA

The arms
of the Saguaro cactus
reach out
in Arizona . . .
The Arizona sun beats down
upon them.
The rains
fall infrequently
in Arizona,
but when it rains
the earth responds,
and soon we find
the Arizona desert
all abloom.

CHICKADEES

It is early in the season
To be hearing chickadees,
With their metricallie music
As they flit about the trees.
Through their song they sound a warning
Of a change in weather soon,
Chickadees, we bid you welcome,
With your winsome, wintry tune.

CLOUDS

See the clouds in coloration
Drifting by,
Coral blending with the blue notes
Of the sky.
Clouds foretell most any storm,
Moisture filled or windy form:
When the clouds close out the light,
Day becomes as dark as night;
Some resemble feather beds,
Others hang their heavy heads.
Watch the colors of the clouds
Up so high:
They may change to lilac shades
By and by.

A BUNDLE OF RAGS

“What will you do with that bundle of rags?
Throw it out!” the weaver was told,
“It will only clutter your closet up,
For those garments are faded and old.”

But the weaver took them with a kindlier tone,
“There is gold in those pockets,” he said;
“I will make of them something that I can sell
Then, will buy me a coat instead.”

That is the way with a weaver’s craft,
Like a prospector panning for gold,
He must look at his art through a customer’s eyes
Then work with it till it is sold.

HIS WORD IS ALWAYS GOOD

While I took a flight to a land unknown,
In a wonderful hospital room,
I wanted to call every League member in
To renew my acquaintance with them.

I was given an hour in which to prepare.
An angel appeared on the scene;
One of God’s great physicians was there
To do the work for Him.

If you find yourselves in a similar plight,
Place your faith in the Lord.
He will carry you joyfully all the way,
For His word is always good.

FAITH AND FEAR

Spring arrived without its flowers;
Lily-white the falling snow . . .
Drifting downward from the heavens
Into mammoth mounds below.

Swollen rivers soon to follow
On their journey to the sea . . .
May the snowdrifts melt more slowly,
Now that they have come to be.

Lord, have mercy on your people,
If in lowland they might dwell,
Should disaster overtake them,
Keep them Master, safe and well.

A TOWN WITH A TAXI

Let me live in a town with a taxi, Lord,
When the problems of ageing arise,
When my footsteps might falter, or fumble to find
The way . . . where uncertainty lies.

Let me live in a town with a taxi, Lord,
When my vision is somewhat impaired,
Then let me remember the good, old days
When the joys of a homelife were shared.

When my fingers are no longer nimble, Lord,
And my hearing is not what it used to be,
Lest I find myself lonely when I live alone,
Let me live in a town with a taxi.

NEW-FALLEN SNOW

Snow has fallen through the night,
Painting all the landscape white,
Morning brings a glad surprise
To fun-loving youthful eyes.
Donning wraps away they go
Romp through new-fallen snow;
Gliding down declivities
On a trusty pair of skis;
Sliding down toboggan slides
Livening up the country sides;
Making snowmen grand and tall,
Each complete with hat and shawl,
Or a fort to hide behind,
With a snowball fight in mind.
Snowmobiles make quite a show
When we have new-fallen snow.

EASTER MORNING

Early on an Easter morning
Clouds hung low in shades of blue,
Out across the wide horizon,
In a sombre sort of hue.
Earth still wore an ermine blanket;
Trees stood by in silhouette;
City street-lights were still burning,
Half the town was sleeping yet.
Then the clouds began to lower,
And the sun came peeping through . . .
Peeping through those barren branches
Till it rose to fullest view,
Beaming like a Christian symbol,
Gleaming with a golden glow,
For it was on Easter morning
Christ arose long years ago.

AT SUN-DOWN

As the sun goes down
The dull cattails of Autumn
Hide a musk-rat tub.

HOPE FOR THE NEW YEAR

The New Year fills us with the hope
Mid prayers and proclamations.
That peace and plenty will prevail
Throughout the many nations.

STRANGE THINGS HAPPEN

The strangest things happen in our garage;
Some things I wish I could camouflage;
A spider thinks it is a parlor for him
As he snares insects in curtains of scrim;
A cutworm, coiled like a rattler, will roll
Like a hula-hoop when the broom takes its toll;
A nightcrawler thinks it an endless expanse
If daytime should find him still on the advance;
A mouse makes a meal out of sweet corn seed
By eating the hearts out - a most wicked deed!
But the strangest of all is the cheerful refrain
The crickets start making right after a rain.
Our garage will provide all the comforts of home
To wayfaring creatures that heedlessly roam . .
And who in the world am I to complain?
I should sweep it more often, but not with disdain!

FEBRUARY

The lay of the land looks different somehow,
In spite of the dirt on the snow,
The scenes are sort of picturesque now
That the wind has ceased to blow,
But one must look beyond the gray to see
A songbird nesting in a tree
Or, hear again that cheerful note
Which fairly bursts a robin's throat . . .
One's hopes are high when spring
Is just around the corner;
One must not sigh, or be
A weary weather mourner;
Beneath those drifts the grass is green . . .
Spring's floral gifts will soon be seen.

LINES OF A WRITER

This resort is becoming a writer's retreat
Where poets talk meters and measure their 'feet'.
A fish line goes into the lake for a bass;
The writer's line goes for the whole world en masse:
The eye-catching beauty of wildlife, and trees,
The sunset, the moonlight, the comforting breeze,
The grace of a rainbow that arches the sky,
The V-line the geese make when traveling by;
The sight of a doe that is feeding her fawn,
A breath-taking moment for soon they are gone.
The wealth of the woodland, each component part -
The moccasin flower lives close to the heart.
The fisherman's line may catch fish he can freeze
While the writer's line captures such wonders as these.

THE SQUIRREL

Playfully the squirrel
Springs about with ease;
Gracefully he swings
Upon a tree-trapeze.
Come! Watch the antics
Of this acrobat,
Clinging to the branches
In his habitat!
Pinecones, nuts, and acorns
Scattered all around,
Will be gathered for his
Storehouse in the ground.

THE COOKIE JAR

I think that I will climb the steps
Up to the cookie jar!
I am rather short as you can see -
I cannot reach that far.
In it I am sure that I will find
A ginger-cookie man,
Some oatmeal bars, or cherry winks
I will reach them if I can.
Oh! yummy yum - some chocolate chips,
Some butter balls and then . . .
I am getting full . . . my tummy tum,
I must step down again.

MASTERS OF MEN

Books stand . . .
So still on the shelves;
That we would not know
They are alive, and are speaking
Unless we would read them ourselves.

Pictures hang . . .
Silently on the wall;
Until we explore
What they are portraying,
We may not understand them at all.

Minds rest . . .
Asleep to the brush, or the pen,
If we do not train them
They will never be
The brilliant "Masters of Men."

PINK PERCALE

The dress that has meant the most to me
Was a little pink percale;
My mother made this dress for me,
From a remnant that came in the mail.

Most of the dresses that I have had
Were either too large, or too small,
But this one fitted me perfectly,
So I loved it most of all.

The dresses are many that I have had,
And some I have loved without fail,
But the dress that has meant the most to me
Was that little pink percale.

THE YEAR DECLINES

I like the way the poplar
Is peeping through the pine:
Displays of golden foliage
Reflect the year's decline.

I like the way the oak trees
In copper-tones and red,
Relay the fact that winter
Will soon be here instead.

I like the way the white pine
Has shed its needles now,
And - through days of winter
Will cherish every bough.

MY LADY OF ROSES

I call her "My Lady of Roses!"
She has roses in every room;
Making her doll-house exquisite,
As if the whole thing was in bloom!

In some rooms they grace the wallpaper,
Or are pieced in a spread for the bed,
While sometimes we find them hand-painted
On a lampshade, or china instead.

In a rug, on a plate, or a picture,
Roses are everywhere . . .
One can almost smell their sweet fragrance
They look so realistic there.

IT IS CHRISTMAS

It is Christmas in our homes today -
Today we celebrate the Christ-child's birth
And songs of gladness ring the earth!
Beneath our trees are gifts piled high -
High as the space beneath each tree,
And families are filled with glee!
We are happy until it hurts -
Hurts within our hearts to know
That some just cannot have it so.

NO RETURNS

I can remember . . .
When I was a child
That I heard of interest and taxes,
But not of recording which racks us;
I can remember . . .
No returns were filed.

THE HOUSING SHORTAGE

Under the broiler,
Sat two lemon pies;
Browning together,
When to my surprise,
One said to the other,
"We are lucky, we two,
To find this apartment
I am sharing with you!"

WORKING IN A DRESS SHOP

Working in a dress shop
Is nothing more than play . . .
Just dressing up the ladies
In new things every day.

If they find a style they like
It gives my heart a lift,
For then they act like Santa Claus
Had given them a gift.

Working in a dress shop
At Eastertime is best,
Each lady looks so lovely
When she is neatly dressed.

I like to think that heaven
Is just a smile away,
When I wait upon the customers
That come in, every day.

THE GARDENERS

Each day we see them working in their garden -
They know that growing plants require care;
The soil is loose - they will not let it harden,
For roots must spread to nourish plants that bear.
He makes a trench to hose some water into;
She furnishes the nutrients they need;
This patient pair is very much akin to
Ideals we would aspire to, indeed!

THE HOUSE BECAME A HOME AGAIN

There was a time the house was young
And lighted windows welcomed all
The members of a family;
But then the house was in despair;
Repairs were needed everywhere.
Restoration came at last:
Gay curtains grace the windows;
The floors were laid with pleasing tile;
The roof was made to shed the rain:
The house became a home again.

WHEN THE SNOW LIES COLD AND DEEP

It is easy to be happy
With the robin on the wing,
When we see the things of nature
That come in early spring,
But is it so in winter
When the snow lies cold and deep?
For then it is that nature lets
The trees and flowers sleep.

It is easy to be happy
In the good old summertime,
When the sun is shining brightly
And the climbing roses climb,
But is it so in winter,
When the snow lies cold and deep?
When all the signs of summer
Are blanketed in sleep?

It is easy to be happy
When the leaves are brilliant hues,
And the temperature is temperate,
We never have the blues,
But is it so in winter
When the snow lies cold and deep?
Our hearts should not be heavy
For spring is just asleep.

THE WALLFLOWER

Vanish O Vanish
Some pounds from my weight!
Make me much thinner
Before it's too late,
Make me, for once, be
The "Belle of the Ball"
Instead of a flower
That sits by the wall!

WHEN THE CORN IS IN THE TASSEL

When the corn is in the tassel,
And the ears begin to form,
It is then our thoughts will turn to
Shorter days and winter's storm!
Soon the leaves will change their color,
Place a carpet on the ground,
Then where winter's snow lies on them
Precious leaf-mold will be found!

WINSTON CHURCHILL

When views of well-planned pageantry
Were video-taped across the sea,
We honored you, who helped to shape
United Kingdom destiny:
You kept the Union Jack unfurled,
While implements of war were hurled;
Your terms of blood, toil, sweat, and tears
Reverberated through the world,
Then we, within this Allied Land,
Placed men and means at your command
We bowed our heads in thankful prayer
That you were guided by God's hand.

WHEN THE BUDS ARE ON THE BRANCHES

When the buds are on the branches
Slowly swelling day by day,
Warmer weather brings a brother
Or sister out to stay.

Gone, the frosty cold of winter,
Stiffened joints and sinus ills;
Oh! the joy of summer weather!
Out! with potions and with pills.

O FROST

O frost, you do destroy
So many things that we enjoy!
Like we snuff out a candle light
When we retire for the night
With one, big icy-breath
You put to death . . .
Or, is it just to rest?
If so - perhaps it is for the best,
But then, those things are sorely missed
That your cold breath has kissed.

FROSTY WINDOWS

Intricate patterns of old lace . . .
Fantastic replicas of yore!
Are taking the place
Of the woodland scenes
That were keeping me spellbound before.

PRAYER FOR THANKSGIVING 1972

O Lord, we thank you kindly
For this miracle of food:
The meat; the fruit; the casseroles
That look and taste so good;
Then Lord, we ask You humbly
To bless it to our need;
We are grateful for the harvest
Which was bountiful indeed! - -
But as we feast upon it
Lord, make us be aware
That there are those, who hunger
Then teach us how to share,
For in this land of plenty
We could have even more,
For we have the potential
But You must keep the score.
We are tired of the bullets,
And the bombs our planes convey!
O Lord, You hold the answer,
Show us a better way;
For while we keep our country's flag
The "Stars and Stripes" unfurled,
The cries for peace reverberate
Throughout the whole, wide world.

PETROGLYPHS

The petroglyphs that Indians
Have chipped upon the rocks,
Make lovers of petrology
Keep turning back their clocks,
To find some bit of Indian lore,
Or some antiquity:
The race portrayed as savages
Was learned in artistry.

While white men wantonly have killed,
The Indians of yore
Would kill for food and clothing needs,
But waste they would deplore.
While tender songs of love they sang,
They were not prone to fears,
When Indians chipped the petroglyphs
On rocks in bygone years.

NOSTALGIA

I picked up a leaf at my leisure
To study the veins that I see;
They look like a miniature road map
Depicting some travel to me.
I find that they lead to the places
Where once I had wanted to roam,
But I know as I gaze at the picture
That all of them lead to my home.

WARM ENOUGH

It was on the very last day of June:
The wrens had struck up a rollicking tune;
The only food that looked good on this day
Was the salad type on a picnic tray
Or, things that were frosty or frozen just
To quench our thirst as we settled the dust.
The third hot day . . the temperature soared,
The wishes for rain were in sweet accord;
Some people went to the lake for a dip . . .
Others made plans for a Northern trip;
New counties were put on the list of distress,
When moisture would come was most anyone's guess;
The bins that were holding a surplus of corn
Began to look better when fields were forlorn;
As the dry grass crumbled beneath our feet
We were deeply disturbed by the inclement heat.

THE FIRST SNOWFLAKE

Fans, who love the winter
The very most of all;
Wait . . . with anticipation
For the first snowflake to fall.

MOTHER NATURE'S BEAUTY QUEEN

In bewilderment I wonder
At the splendor of your gown;
With its glitter in the sunlight,
Which illuminates the town!

Only yesterday I marveled
At your dress of snowy-white;
There had been a transformation
In the quiet of the night.

When I saw you in the Autumn
You were wearing brown and gold;
It was just before the winter
Chose to move in with its cold!

In late April you were wearing
Pale-pink blossoms in your hair;
Apple-green was for mid-summer,
While your fruit was brought to bear.

Day by day your apples ripened
And were gleaming red and bright;
Winning hearts of little people
With an apple-appetite!

Most amazing works of wonder!
Modeling for every scene . . .
Glitter! Glitter in the sunlight,
"Mother Nature's Beauty Queen."

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

While Christmas bells are ringing,
Their message to impart,
May the spirit of Christmas
Dwell in every heart.

MELANCHOLY

“Why be so melancholy?
You seldom smile, dear!”
“But how can one be happy,
While holding back a tear?”
“The present has its problems;
The future may be worse;
So smile a bit, my darling;
Those shadows will disperse!
For pensiveness is folly;
The bright sun shines above . . .
No need to be downhearted,
So smile, for me, my love.”

AT THE RESORT

A pontoon is merrily making its way:
The ducks swim aside to avoid it;
The beavers are building a beaver dam,
Where an ice-jam has partly destroyed it.
The martins moved into the martin house;
Old glory is waving above it;
The frogs in the meadow are croaking a lay,
And sincerely I say that I love it.

BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies are beautiful
In black or brown-and-gold,
But butterflies that bother us
Are the ones our stomachs hold!

MORE LONELY WHEN IT RAINS

I can see him sitting there
By the window . . . with a stare,
While facial lines reveal his many aches and pains!
I can hear him talking . . . still
Resting hand on window sill,
As heavy rain keeps making rivulets in the lanes.
Yes, I see him sitting there,
While his lips repeat this prayer,
He sees the rain come trickling down the window panes;
“Master make the sun to shine
On this lonely heart of mine,
For I always feel more lonely when it rains.”

I can see the lightning flash;
I can hear the thunder crash!
And it makes a shiver travel through my veins.
Now the clouds are passing by;
There is a rainbow in the sky!
Heaps of leaves have been built up by the drains.
Still I see him sitting there
In his own familiar chair,
And I hear him speak in slow and feeble strains . . .
“I am so glad the sun will shine
On this lonely heart of mine,
For I always feel more lonely when it rains.”

TO A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

The gifts you send to me
Are wrapped so tastefully;
The greeting penned within the wrap
Is written just for me.
The ribbon-ends you curl with love
Then, tuck some trinket in.
Far more than friends are we . . .
More like a next of kin.

The things you send: a holly wreath
Or, sprigs of bittersweet;
Not what you spend on me,
But that in thoughts we meet.
I love these tender things you do
Because . . . I love you too!

TRAILING ARBUTUS

By leaving the roadside snowbanks behind,
If we would follow the scent we would find
The trailing arbutus and, by lifting the leaves,
See where blossoms are hiding from innocent thieves,
But why should we gather these dainty, pink flowers,
Whose delicate fragrance would last but few hours?
Why not just leave them where they will grow
To propagate freely under the snow?

THE SWALLOWS WILL RETURN

The opening to a birdhouse
Might give one hope anew,
When snow clings to the branches,
And coats the birdhouse too,
By bringing thoughts of summer
When days are warm and long:
Then swallows are in fancy
To fill the air with song;
We walk beneath them freely -
Quite to their unconcern . . .
When all the snow has melted
The swallows will return.

GOING FISHING

A muskrat swims near the grassy shore
Where the rushes bend and sway;
A bullfrog sits on a lily pad
While he croaks his heart away,
But I see a fisherman idling by . . .
In quest of a bass he is casting his fly;
Now if he can catch one . . . Why can't I?
I'm going fishing today.

SOMEBODY CARES

Do you listen when the robin
From a tree-top in the spring,
Sings a lovesong to his lady?
What a simple winsome thing!
While it tells of baby robins
In a nest just built for two,
Does it fill you with a longing
To have someone loving you?

Do you find when picking violets
From the lowlands where they grow,
That their tiny scented-petals
Tend to set your heart aglow,
While they bring to mind a picture
Of a cottage on a hill,
Where the evening brings the calling
Of a lonesome whip-poor-will?

Do you sometimes watch the sunlight
Make the dewdrops in the grass
Dance a bit, like little fairies,
While the morning hours pass?
Does this optical illusion
Make your heart go pit-a-pat,
While you long for someone only,
Who can make you dance like that?

Do you ever hear the river
As it gurgles on its way,
Tell of places it is going,
Why it does not choose to stay?
Does it make you feel like running
From the burdens that you bear,
To the open arms of someone
That you know will really care?

CIRCLES OF ICE

The river is teeming with circles of ice -
All frosted, and floating, and free -
And I find myself dreaming of drifting along
Like the circles of ice that I see.
Do not get me wrong,
It will not be for long;
The ice in the river will melt and be gone,
While my dreams are like bubbles
That burst with the dawn.

While I am dreaming of drifting along
My heart feels a yearning for you,
But the circles keep turning, and whirling in turn
Alluring me back to their view -
A sight to behold
All frosty and cold,
I might linger forever,
But still not endeavor
To drift like the ice in the river.

PRAIRIE WIND

Prairie wind, bring the rain
To the parched prairie land,
All the grass and the grain to sustain;
Weeks of waiting in vain
Have been hard to withstand . . .
Bring the rain to the plain,
Prairie wind.

Plants have grown tall and green
On the bare prairie field,
Not a raindrop the clouds would withhold;
Then the ripening scene
Meant a bountiful yield
Prairie gold, we were told,
Prairie wind.

THE HAYMOW

Up in the haymow -
All dark inside,
When we were children
We used to hide,
As we played at the game
Of hide-and-go-seek,
When our work was complete
At the end of the week;
Until somebody spied,
In sudden surprise -
Piercing the shadows,
A pair of bright eyes!
Then down the ladder
We would go in straight line,
While a shiver meandered
Up each little spine;
They were only the eyes
Of Tabby, our cat
But how could a youngster
Be sure about that?

A BIRD ALARM CLOCK

My alarm clock is a robin,
Or an oriole or wren,
For I know when they start singing
That morning breaks again.
My eyes are quickly opened,
Then to my feet I spring
To spend delightful moments
Doing my favorite thing.

At times I think the phoebe
With its repetitious tune -
Should I still feel like sleeping -
Awakens me too soon,
But being an early riser
I honor every call,
For I find a bird alarm clock
Is the finest of them all!

HARD TIMES

I have known how it feels to be hungry;
I have learned what it means to be poor;
I have cried till I slept in the nighttime
When hard times used to knock at our door.

I am glad we are feeding our children;
Helping elderly health to regain,
Who for talents He gave them,
So much more they might hope to attain.

I am glad we abandoned the poor-farm
The old people used to deplore,
When the problems of age overtook them.
And hard times used to knock on their door.

I find myself counting my blessings,
Giving thanks to our Father, and then
I find myself crossing my fingers
Thinking - hard times might come back again!

FAITH IN THE FUTURE

The apple trees, in our back yard,
Were planted there by someone,
Who visualized the future.
We, too, have planted apple trees,
That someone else might harvest
Fruit for apple pie, and cake.
And some to share with neighbors.

WHO'S AFRAID

Skiping on the lawn would be
Much more fun for Sue and me,
Were it not for garter snakes
Searching there for ponds or lakes.
If we chance to see one there
We both get an awful scare!
Just a wriggling, frightened mass -
Which we do not dare to pass.

TO A NEST OF BABY ROBINS

To a nest of baby robins
Goes my heartfelt sympathy;
Many things will prey upon these
Tender bits of infancy;
Hungry cats could stalk the branches;
(Mother robin fears their plot)
Driving rains might mean destruction,
Claiming one as like as not.

THE SNOW

The snow
Is impressive
On the pines,
Piled high
Like fluffy frosting
On a cake.
While poets write
In tender lines,
The artists undertake
To paint
The wonder scene
The Master's hand
Has placed upon
The evergreen.

SPRING

The trees that were dormant are budding at last;
All signs of a difficult winter are past;
The frogs in the meadow are croaking a lay,
And all indications are for a good day.

A red-breasted robin goes by on the wing,
While eyeing the garden plot early in spring;
One day he will build him a nest in a tree;
Then he must provide for a small family.

The pages are open to packets of seeds . . .
Each claiming its adequacy for our needs;
We soon will be planting potatoes and peas,
And capping tomatoe plants lest they might freeze.

WATER

I like the sound of water
As it ripples over rocks!
Delight in watching fishermen's
Excitement by the docks!
I like to drop the anchor,
When the fish begin to bite,
Or see them play at eventide
Before I say, "Goodnight!"

I like the feel of water
When it is clear and cool;
White water-lilies capture me,
When they enhance a pool!
I like a drink of water,
For it refreshes me . . .
Yes, water wins the golden cup,
For its entirety.

OUR HOME IS LIKE A LANDING STRIP

Our home is like a landing strip;
We leave quite frequently;
Still it is nice to have a place,
Which gives us privacy.
But I can hear our telephone
Some friend is calling now,
To see if we will help someone
Sometime, some place, somehow.

Time was when we were home a lot . . .
The place was occupied;
With duties to attend each day
Both within and outside.
But now those occupants are gone;
Our time is all our own,
Our home is like a landing strip
Where we live all alone.

Do not bewail the time it takes
To raise a family . . .
There is nothing finer in the world,
As you might well agree;
For soon those busy days become
A pleasure to recall,
And home becomes a landing strip
With no one there at all.

RESTLESS

Tonight . . . I am filled with emotion!
To rest . . . who ever conceived such a notion?
My spirits are high as the wind passing by
While it flirts with the waves on the ocean!

WAITING FOR SPRING

It is easy to see
That the leaf on the tree
Is waiting till spring comes along;
With the first drop of rain,
That appears on the pane,
The buds will be bursting again.
Mother earth will be swelling,
And birds that were dwelling,
In climates attune to their song,
Will be flocking together,
Like birds of a feather,
To wing their way over the plain.

THE WIND

Let us listen to the wind
While it blows;
While it blows! blows! blows!
Clothes we placed upon the line,
At the early hour of nine,
Loosened, left, and goodness knows
Will we ever find those clothes
If it snows?

Let us listen to the wind
While it blows!
While it blows! blows! blows!
Folks, who live among the trees
Wish they had a little breeze
To dry their clothes.
But the open country knows
A terrific wind that blows
Its frozen clothes.

THE WEASEL

On a walk in the woods on a winter day
I wondered how life went on;
Then, listening learned how a weasel works;
A pathetic cry, and a life was gone.
The victim was taken unaware,
For a weasel is whiter than snow;
With a little black tip on the end of its tail,
And beady, black eyes that glow.
I watched while it pushed,
And I saw when it pulled
On a creature thrice its size,
And how in the world it could do that thing
Came to my complete surprise!
For with nothing short of an iron will
It took that rabbit up the hill.

THE SEA GULLS FLY

Behind the plow . . . behind the plow,
The furrows roll behind the plow!
While earthworms tumble where we toil
The sea gulls fly!
As wheels keep turning, sea gulls fly.
Wind-tossed above the upturned soil
Behind the plow . . . behind the plow
The sea gulls fly!
Many wings are kept in motion,
In the scheme of this confusion
While we plow with deep devotion
The sea gulls fly!

LET'S FACE IT

To some retreat
That is quite discreet
I would like to hide away,
Where I might find
That peace of mind
So vital in this day!

The cares that come
Might seem to some
Quite ordinary fare,
While some indeed
Still feel the need
To steal away somewhere!

The cares of life
And mental strife
Are a most congenial pair . . .
We can't reveal
The way we feel
So we steal away somewhere!

But let us forget
That we are upset,
Or have some special care . . .
It hurts inside
But let's not hide
Or, steal away anywhere!

MY HOME

Not just a place to eat and to sleep,
But a place to grow, to cherish, to keep!
A place to play in merriment;
A place to toil in sweet content:
The heart and the soul of democracy!
That is what my home means to me.

SMALL CREATURES

How interesting small creatures are -
Like ladybugs and rocky-mountain ticks,
Butterflies and bumblebees,
Angleworms and walking sticks!
Like dragon flies and spiders,
Fireflies and fleas,
Grasshoppers and armyworms
That eat the leaves on trees!
Like honeybees and hornets,
Silverfish and flies,
Potatoe bugs and weevils
And mosquitoes on the rise!
Like crickets, ants, and centipedes,
Cockroaches and lice.
We cherish many very much,
But some are not so nice.

GRATITUDE

Sometimes we grumble,
And sometimes we groan
About our taxes,
Or the cost of a loan;
But where could we live
In a better way
Than we do right here
In the U.S.A.?

BABY'S BREATH

Like a mist the baby's breath
Is blooming midst the flowers;
It makes a showy background
Which last for hours and hours.
Once this dainty baby's breath
I planted in the border;
Weeded it with tenderness
And kept the plants in order.

Now it makes me happy
To watch it while it grows;
To bring bouquets to cheerless days
In winter when it snows.

NOISES

Listen to the noises in the morning
When the sun is rising in the sky;
We hear orioles, and wrens, and robins
Singing as the day goes by.

Listen to the noises in the noontime
When the trains and planes are on the go;
Endless traffic on the highway;
Going where? Lord only knows.

Listen to the noises in the evening
When the young are being put to bed;
Every little squab within the dove-cote
Is told to hush its sleepy head.

IMAGINATION

Imagination we possess,
If we can watch with tenderness
While spiders, in an open weave,
Enclose a doorway to deceive;
Then turn to spin fine threads of gold,
Which tell a tale that will be told,
Long after we are laid to rest
Beneath the earth's green velvet breast.

Imagination too we find -
Is what inventors have in mind,
When they would build, for you and me,
That thing which they have yet to see;
Some thing which through the years will stand
To serve mankind throughout the land,
When they have joined the immortal throng
To be remembered well and long.

Imagination is the gift
Which gives an architect a lift,
When placing blueprints on a page,
For those who would his art engage;
For every edifice on earth
Was once a vivid dream
Of some God-gifted architect's
Imaginative scheme.

THE END OF SUMMER

The sun is shining brightly
On the goldenrod - in bloom,
While leafy shadows filter
The sunlight in my room.

But rain is in the forecast,
Cool weather on its way,
Which means the end of summer
Could be most any day.

WIND-BLOWN BLOSSOMS

"Let nature help you, Honey."
Is a phrase that can be used
In dealing with the flowers
Which nature has abused;
For blossoms on a wind-blown stem
In a spot reserved for them
Will provide that graceful touch
A flower basket needs so much.

WHEN THE BABY COMES

There is excitement in the air;
Boxes are filled with infant wear;
Green and yellow, pink and blue
With snowy white are soft and new.

There must not be a noise at all,
So Daddy tip-toes down the hall;
With voices low and hearing keen
Mother seems the most serene.

Little doo-dads here and there
Are placed about with special care;
Baby's breath and button mums
Greet the baby when it comes.

THE BABY SITTER'S SONG

What better time
To think in rhyme
Than while we baby-sit?
Our thoughts in song
When hours get long
Might even be a hit!

The clock goes tick:
The clock goes tock;
The hands go scurrying on!
While children sleep,
We vigil keep;
Then soon the hours are gone!

THE WOODPECKER

Now what do you suppose
That woodpecker sees
As he hammers away
At those old, dead trees?
One would think that his babies
Were locked up there:
That he had to get them out
To the good, fresh air,
But dearie me
That cannot be,
For I can see
His babies three . . .
High in the stump
Above the lilac clump
They are keeping an eye on me.

THE WINDMILL

Sometimes, at night, when I am alone
I listen to the windmill groan;
As it turns on so faithfully
It gives me needed company.
While it brings water from down deep
It lures me to the land of sleep,
While from its tower in the sky
It sings a soothing lullaby.

It tells me not to be distraught,
Disillusioned or overwrought;
That windmills take the lengthy shift
Wherever water needs a lift
And, if at times, it seems to pause . . .
It is oil it needs - it is not because
The mill and me are home alone
Trying to sleep and not to moan.

HAIR ECOLOGY

Perhaps one day we will invent
A use for human hair:
Then make the price attractive
So folks with hair to spare;
Will clip it for the market
Many times a year . . .
This could be an incentive
To make them want to shear.

We could conduct a contest
Then weigh the product in,
The rules could be so flexible
That anyone could win,
The prizes could be mirrors
All crystal clear as rain,
So prize-winning contestants
Could see themselves again.

RIBBON GRASS

As memory takes me back I see
A field of blooming clover,
Where bumblebees are sipping up
Supplies to tide them over
A winter that is really rough,
With cold, inclement weather.

I see my mother planting things
Like wormwood, thyme and tansy
Beside a fragrant, flower bed
Of mignonette and pansies;
Where ribbon grass will graciously
Tie them all together.

BROKEN BREAD

The grapes, that cling onto the vine,
Are gifts from God, for making wine.
The wheat, which has a golden glow,
We grind for making into dough.
We eat the bread He breaks that we,
From all our sinfulness be free.
"This is my blood," the Master said,
We drink it with the broken bread.

BENEDICTION

The Lord has been your Master
Throughout these many years,
And He has kept you always
Smiling through your tears -
He has traveled with you
Wherever you would roam,
But now He deemed it timely
To be calling you home.

FOR ART

Since you are gone, I truly must say
That I have missed you each lonely day.
Now all the love that you gave to me
Fondly comes back to my memory.
If we could live our life over again,
These fifty-eight milestones may have been
Lived in a more enjoyable way.
Bound close by your illness these past years
I feel your presence in spite of my tears.

RAKING LEAVES

Raking leaves, raking leaves,
We rake with fascination;
Each leafy whirl
A chocolate swirl
In our imagination.

Raking leaves, raking leaves,
Time soon will decompose them;
But as for now
We wonder how
We can predispose them.

CALORIES

Some ladies, on the obese side,
Were leafing through their cookbooks,
In search of satisfying foods
Which would improve their looks.
The sections they were searching in
Were those of cakes and pies,
Which add to inches and to pounds
But do not minimize,
When one said to the other, "Dear,
What is a calorie?
Could it be something that we add,
But never subtract, really?"